

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 8, 10, and 14 to 22 are pending in the present application. In view of the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

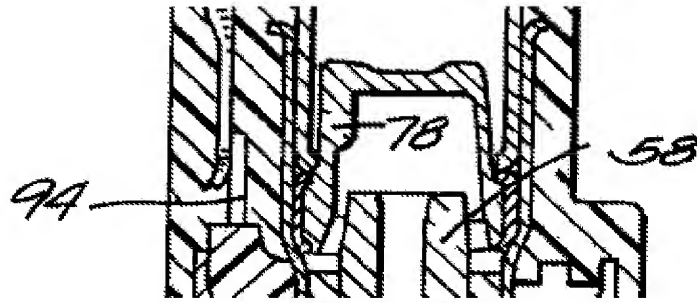
II. Rejection of Claims 8, 10, and 14 to 22 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 8, 10, and 14 to 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,382,532 ("French et al.") and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0185555 ("Kobayashi et al."). It is respectfully submitted that the combination of French et al. and Kobayashi et al. does not render unpatentable these claims for at least the following reasons.

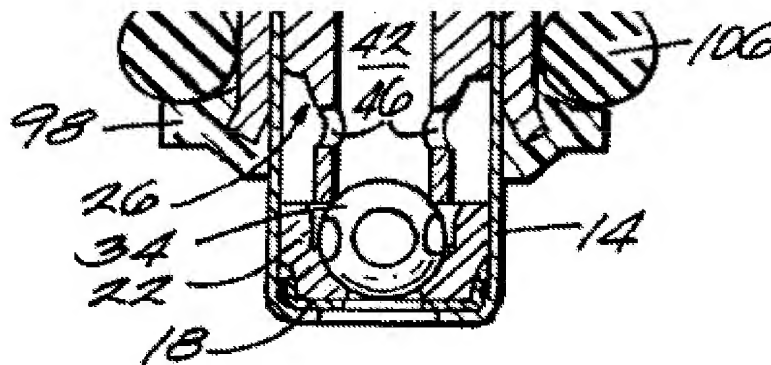
The Final Office Action contends that it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the metallic jacket 14 of French et al., in view of the alleged teaching of Kobayashi et al., to have a greater wall thickness at an upper portion than a lower portion.

French et al. discloses the fuel injector 10 is overmolded with plastic overmolding 98. Thus, it would be readily apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that the unmodified jacket 14 disclosed by French et al. is fully capable of withstanding any pressures encountered during the overmolding. Thus, there would be **no apparent reason to increase the thickness of any portion of the jacket 14** of French et al. As regards the suggestion at page 3 of applying a higher pressure during the overmolding, it is entirely unclear why or how one of ordinary skill in the art would increase the pressure during the overmolding process. Such a proposed pressure increase is in no way taught or suggested by the combination of French et al. and Kobayashi et al. It is further noted that, even if the molding process of Kobayashi et al. differs in some way from that of French et al.—which is in no manner apparent from the disclosures Kobayashi et al. and French et al.—there is no indication whatsoever that the molding process of Kobayashi et al. creates a higher pressure than the molding process of French et al.

Moreover, as is plainly illustrated in Figure 1 of French et al., partially reproduced below, the upper portion of the jacket 14 is **already reinforced** by the insertion of the extension tube 70, as well as additional structure, into the upper portion of the jacket 14.



Further, the overmolding 98 is not confined to the upper portion of the jacket 14 of French et al. Rather, as clearly illustrated in Figure 1 of French et al., partially reproduced below, the overmolding 96 is also applied to the lower portion of the jacket 14, notably in a region that—as opposed to the upper portion of the jacket 14—does not have any interior reinforcement.



Thus, even if it is assumed, *arguendo*, that there would have been some reason to increase the wall thickness of the jacket 14—which applicants do not concede—there would have been no reason or rationale to increase only the thickness of the upper portion and not the thickness of the lower portion. Rather, since the upper portion of the jacket 14 is reinforced by additional structure (including the inserted extension tube 70) and the lower portion of the jacket 14 includes a non-reinforced region over which the overmolding 98 is formed, making the upper portion of the jacket 14 thicker than the lower portion of the jacket 14 would be counter-intuitive.

Kobayashi et al. does not cure the aforementioned critical deficiencies in the present rejection. In this regard, it is noted that the thicker upper portion 2C of case 2—as opposed to the upper portion of the jacket 14 of French et al.—is in no

manner reinforced, interiorly or exteriorly, along the vast majority of its axial extension.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of French et al. and Kobayashi et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, a valve sleeve wherein a constant decreased radial cross section and a constant decreased wall thickness of the discharge-side region extend axially beyond the valve needle in both the discharge direction of the fuel and the direction opposite the discharge direction of the fuel, as recited in claim 8, or a valve sleeve wherein a constant decreased radial cross section and a constant decreased wall thickness of the discharge-side region extend axially beyond the valve needle in both the intake-side direction and a direction opposite the intake-side direction, as recited in claim 15.

As indicated above, the combination French et al. and Kobayashi et al. does not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features of either of claims 8 and 15. As such, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of French et al. and Kobayashi et al. does not render unpatentable either of claims 8 and 15, or any of claims 10, 14, and 16 to 22, which ultimately depend from claims 8 and 15. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 11, 2010

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